Theo Fleury was at McNally Robinson Booksellers in Saskatoon for a signing event for his book Playing with Fire. Hundreds of people stood in line for hours to meet the NHL legend. He was gifted with a Métis sash from the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan. It was presented by Roland Duplessis. Duplessis was joined by his grandson Tyson.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)
Jordyn Burnouf is the 2009 Education Award Scholarship winner for the SaskTel Aboriginal Youth Awards, funded by the Wicihitowin Foundation – the Cree word for “helping each other” – established to honour First Nations Veterans while assisting and honouring youth.

Burnouf was nominated by her Ile a la Crosse high school teachers for this award, sponsored by Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority, because of her outstanding academic and community leadership.

“Seeing all the other nominees was amazing,” noted Burnouf, adding she was astounded by the other youth, and certain she didn’t have a chance. “These people are amazing – getting the award was crazy, running against all those incredible people.”

But Burnouf is no slouch. At Rossignol High School she received Northern Academic Achievement awards several times, numerous class awards, and was selected for the Lieutenant-Governor Leadership forum due to academics, athletics, extracurricular, and community involvement.

She also received entrance scholarships from the University of Saskatchewan itself, Cameco, Pledco, Northern Spirit, and the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation.

“My advice is to apply for scholarships, as many as you can – I applied to 50 and got about five,” she said.

Now in pre-med at the University of Saskatchewan, she’s enjoying her studies – and playing on two campus rec teams, including the College of Medicine hockey team, where other medical students give her valuable advice on and off the ice – but being away from home is tougher than expected.

“I’m getting into things and really like it – I’m in love with biology right now – but it’s different being away from home,” she admitted, adding a strong support system of close friends, and frequent family visits, helps ease homesickness.

“Or I talk to my one-year-old nephew on the phone – that always cheers me up.”

She also returns for occasional visits and volleyball games – and is looking forward to the Christmas break, spending part of it volunteering for the World Juniors Hockey Championship.

“Like the whole idea of it – I love what you study to become a doctor,” she said, adding there were many teachers who really made a difference – encouraging, influencing, and challenging her to study hard.

“I don’t want to work a 9 to 5 office job – I want to do something that really makes a difference.”

Jordyn Burnouf has her sights set on a medical career. She recently won the 2009 Education Award at the Aboriginal Youth Awards.
The House of Commons recently took time to celebrate the successes of 14 remarkable Aboriginal Canadians selected for the 17th Annual National Aboriginal Achievement Awards, taking place on March 26 in Regina.

After being welcomed into the gallery, and acknowledged by members of the House of Commons, recipients attended a reception afterwards, hosted by Speaker of the House Peter Milliken.

Included among the esteemed recipients is Don Worme Q.C. I.P., a Saskatoon-based lawyer who has reached the top of the legal profession. He has achieved the distinction of being named a Queen’s and Indigenous People’s Counsel and he played a central role at the Stonechild Inquiry probing Saskatoon police conduct. Most recently, Worme was named counsel for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission gathering the stories of Indian residential school survivors.

Worme is originally from Kawacatoose First Nation and attended high school in Regina. Coming home to Regina will hold special meaning for Worme. "It will be overwhelming, I assume," said Worme, who for once admitted to being at a loss for words.

"Believe me, as a guy who toils in the trenches, we don’t expect to be recognized. But it is nice and an absolute honour and privilege to be named along with the current recipients and all the amazing people that have come before us."

"Every year the jury selects an extraordinary group of recipients who reveal such outstanding talent and dedicated service," said Roberta Jamieson, President and CEO of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation.

Held in Regina, the NAAA 2010 focuses on the theme of Potential and, the ability within us all to achieve greatness, despite obstacles.

With hosts Tinsel Korey (Twilight, The Guard) and Raoul Trujillo (True Blood, Apocalypto) the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards continue the mission of celebrating Aboriginal Canadians who have made a profound positive impact in their communities, across Canada, and worldwide. Featuring performers including international music icon Buffy Sainte-Marie, Crystal Shawanda, Elisapie Isaac, Lorne Cardinal, Michael Greyeyes and Leema Lafontaine, the 17th annual NAAA will recognize the achievements of the following individuals: William Commanda, OC - Lifetime Achievement Award; Skawenniio Barnes - Special Youth Award; Kananginak Pootoogook – Arts; Ellen Melosky - Business & Commerce; Tom Crane Bear - Culture, Heritage & Spirituality; Dr. Raoul McKay – Education; Danny Beaton - Environment & Natural Resources; Madeleine Ketéskwew Dion Stout, BN, MA, Ph.D (Hon.) – Health; Donald E. Worme, QC, IPC - Law & Justice; Kenneth Atsenhaienton Deer - Media and Communications; Hon. Eric William Robinson – Politics; Edith Cloutier - Public Service; Monica Pinette – Sports; Doug Henry - Technology & Trades
Newsmakers aplenty

It is always difficult to pick the newsmaker of the year. So much happens every year that it is hard to decide what was most relevant story... locally, provincially and nationally.

Should we focus on an event or a person? We posed this question to our family of writers and they came back with a wide variety of answers but no consensus number one newsmaker (except the two who picked Barrack Obama, but how lazy is that? He is the President of the United States. All he does is make news!). So we guess that there are several newsmakers this year.

The event that has received the most amount of ink of any story has been the H1N1 scare. The government has effectively dropped the ball and handled this ‘crisis’ very poorly, with issues ranging from poor communication, running out of vaccines and by shipping body bags to remote First Nations.

The federal government has handled this as well as the Three Stooges would have. When it comes to great handling of the H1N1 crisis, one has to look no further than Cowessess First Nation.

They had a pandemic plan in place, people trained and a community that was aware of what was going on.

That was refreshing to see. Even more refreshing was to see the pandemic come and go with little more than a ripple in the community. Thank goodness.

History was made this year at the Assembly of First Nations election assembly in Calgary.

After eight grueling rounds of voting, B.C. Hereditary Chief Sean Atleo edged out former FSIN Chief Perry Bellegarde to replace Phil Fontaine as National Chief. This election will go down in history as the one that forced the AFN to change their voting system so that there would be no more around the clock elections.

Politics was certainly on the mind of one of our writers who said the election of Guy Lonechild as Chief of the FSIN was a historic moment with his promise to focus on children and women and to get a woman as the AFN Regional Chief from Saskatchewan. This writer also had kudos for Métis Nation Saskatchewan President Robert Doucette for turning around a debt-ridden, credibility-crippled Métis Nation. Smart observation.

Chief Lonechild also assigned himself the First Nations University in his portfolio and has given lots of students hope. We just received a press release from the FNUC Students association calling on the current administration for accountability to the students on the way they are mishandling THEIR University. It is great to see the activism and care from the students of today. They are the ones that can really affect change in our community.

Sticking with youth, three young men from Meadow Lake, Devin Knot, Brett Opikokew and Joshua Lasas were out one night and saw a mini van get swept into a ditch by flood waters. Fearlessly, the young men swam out in the freezing water and saved a woman and her three children from certain drowning. Since then the men have been to the provincial legislature and met Premier Brad Wall and have also been acknowledged nationally. How proud we are of them.

Another group of people have also been getting attention this year. Residential school survivors have been waiting a long time to get an apology, a settlement and a chance to tell their stories.

With two down, now we are waiting for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to come through so people can tell their story and begin the healing process. Once this is completed, we can all start to move forward in a good way.

Here’s to all of the residential school survivors and their families. Let 2010 be a year of healing.

An Apology......

We messed up a name last month. We incorrectly identified a soldier we interviewed at the FSIN powwow. We apologize to Kale Seesequasis for the error.

We’re saying goodbye to Faith

Next year will be a big change for Eagle Feather News. Our sales manager and good friend Faith McLean is moving on. She has realized her calling and has been attending the Indigenous Teachers Education Program at the University of Saskatchewan for the past four months and will be devoting herself full-time to her studies in 2010.

We couldn’t be happier for her or for the children she will eventually teach.

We want to thank Faith for her wit, wisdom and leadership over the past six years and all of us here at Eagle Feather News wish her nothing but the best of luck in her studies and career.
I'm sure I saw some of Santa's Elves at the 7-Eleven on Twenty-Second Street the other day. They were all dressed up in Christmas red and they spoke a language I didn't understand. Some girls were following them around laughing and cussing. These elves wore matching red bandanas. Someone said they were Bloods. I wondered what Blood Indians, probably from Stand Off Alberta, were doing in Cree country.

Years ago we used to steal their horses and they used to steal our women — both had nice legs.

I sure wish they would have stolen that mouthy girl who was saying the “F” word every other sentence. I think she was partly pickled from all that alcohol on her breath.

“Treaty Nine in 1929. It is not only the name change that is where the Treaty was signed.” The speaker in Big Trout Lake in remote northwestern Ontario, an Oji-Cree community now called Kitcunhmaykoosib Inninuwg, was referring to the adhesion signing to Treaty Nine in 1929.

She is one of seven women I have met who personally witnessed the signing of historic treaties. All are now deceased. The stories in KI, as the Cree elders knew.

One of the official reports on indigenous languages was done by Anastasia Shkilnyck for the federal Treasury Board in 1993-94. Aside from some RCAP staff members and my fellow commissioner, the late Bertha Wilson, the first woman to sit on the Supreme Court of Canada, then retired, all the passengers were local folk going to Kitcunhmaykoosib Inninuwg.

The safety announcements came over the sound system in the small plane. First they came in English. Then they came again, this time in the French language. Not a word in Oji-Cree.

Our storytellers, the grannies, were unforgettable bundles of smiling wrinkles wrapped round with head scarves that we used to call baboshkas when I was little. They took every opportunity to greet everyone with a friendly handshake.

The stories were about the signing of the Treaty, and the life that the people lived before that time.

"I remember when I first saw a white man," said one, revealing insights known to extremely few people today. One story was about a friend of the story-teller, an Elder who took sick and was flown to the city for treatment. She spoke only Oji-Cree, the indigenous language spoken in Kitcunhmaykoosib Inninuwg since time beyond collective memory. Somehow, the friend did not get to the hospital. It seems there were communications problems at the airport. She knew no English and no one was there who could understand her. The short version of the story is that the next morning the police found the frozen body of an Oji-Cree Elder on the streets of the town.

"If I get sick" said the grannie telling the story of her friend, "I will not go. I will stay here".

Another told of her grandchildren who now lived in the city. She told of her anguish because the grandchildren do not know Oji-Cree and it is hard to commu-
nicate with them.

I know of at least two official government reports on indigenous languages of Canada. Each concludes that only three languages have a chance of survival: Cree, Ojibway and Inuktitut. I don’t know if that means Oji-Cree is in or out. But everywhere our languages are dying.

One of the official reports on indige-
nous languages was done by Anastasia Shkilnyck for the federal Treasury Board in the mid-1980s. I recall when she was interviewing me, and she had never heard of such a thing as Michif language.

The indigenous peoples speak a variety of languages. It matters not whether linguists characterize them as languages or dialects or patois or creole.

Like all languages, they are our unique modes of communications, our carriers and transmitters of unique thoughts and cultures.

I have previously stated my view that a true vision of Canada must be built upon its foundations as an indigenous North American country and not a European country. That includes not only language but symbols and official repre-

sentation. The indigenous peoples must be reflected in the institutions of Canada.

Recognition and protection of languages is one avenue. Another, which costs little but packs a powerful message, is the idea of involving indigenous repre-
sentatives in official welcoming and other ceremonies, such as welcoming of diplomats and heads of state. This proposal was made by the Royal Commission in 1996. The good news is that according to media reports, local First Nation leaders are to be made special VIP guests and representatives at the Winter Olympics.

That does not quite make up for the failure of governments to accept such a role for recognition of indigenous people, but it is encouraging. It is a bit disappoint-

-looking though to read the snide language in which the news has been reported in some quarters.

As the year ends, we are lucky when we can remember some truly unforgettable characters, and the things they stand for, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Remembering some unforgettable characters

“T"ey came ashore here and that is where the Treaty was signed.” The speaker in Big Trout Lake in remote northwestern Ontario, an Oji-Cree community now called Kitcunhmaykoosib Inninuwg, was referring to the adhesion signing to Treaty Nine in 1929.

She is one of seven women I have met who personally witnessed the signing of historic treaties. All are now deceased. The stories in KI, as the Cree elders knew.

One of the official reports on indigenous languages was done by Anastasia Shkilnyck for the federal Treasury Board in the mid-1980s. I recall when she was interviewing me, and she had never heard of such a thing as Michif language.

The indigenous peoples speak a variety of languages. It matters not whether linguists characterize them as languages or dialects or patois or creole.

Like all languages, they are our unique modes of communications, our carriers and transmitters of unique thoughts and cultures.

I have previously stated my view that a true vision of Canada must be built upon its foundations as an indigenous North American country and not a European country. That includes not only language but symbols and official repre-

sentation. The indigenous peoples must be reflected in the institutions of Canada.

Recognition and protection of languages is one avenue. Another, which costs little but packs a powerful message, is the idea of involving indigenous repre-
sentatives in official welcoming and other ceremonies, such as welcoming of diplomats and heads of state. This proposal was made by the Royal Commission in 1996. The good news is that according to media reports, local First Nation leaders are to be made special VIP guests and representatives at the Winter Olympics.

That does not quite make up for the failure of governments to accept such a role for recognition of indigenous people, but it is encouraging. It is a bit disappoint-

-looking though to read the snide language in which the news has been reported in some quarters.

As the year ends, we are lucky when we can remember some truly unforgettable characters, and the things they stand for, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.
Nothing as poor as a turkey with no drumsticks

Have you ever wondered about Santa Claus? You know, the fat, red-cheeked, red-suited capitalist with a ho, ho, ho, who makes you want to spend your hard earned cash as fast as you can or puts you into such a depression at the thought of him that you just want to never get out of bed again. Without sounding like a complete dinosaur, I must say that in my lifetime I have gone the whole nine yards with the old fat.

My first encounter with him was in 1946. I don’t remember him before that so I am assuming he didn’t exist on our road allowance. But in 1946 he arrived at our house after everybody had gone to midnight candies, apples and oranges. We had never heard uncle’s stories about the “little fat man who lived on the roof, which is what we had been told he would do. We had also been told be red a red cutter pulled by a bunch of reindeer. We had a hard time wrapping our heads around a bunch of deer pulling a cutter across the midnight sky, but uncle said it was “white magic” and so we believed him.

“Sssh, my brother whispered and we held our breath as something, someone walked across the roof and stopped just over our heads. We heard, “woa, whoa,” “It’s him! It’s him,” my brother Ray was almost beside himself.

“Sssh, you’ll scare him away.” Ben grabbed his arm. We all set up and strained to hear more. Sure enough someone was up there. We could hear blowing and stamping and a man’s voice saying “Whoa”.

Then the language switched to Cree/Michif. “Ah bah mojee!” “haah payatk!”

More grunting and sliding, then a crash! We jumped out of bed and raced to the kitchen where our mother and aunts were all crowded at the door pulling on coats and rubber boots and laughing hystERICALLY. We pushed past them in our long johns and bare feet and there on the ground lay our dad and uncles. When they saw us they jumped up and dad pointing at the sky yelled, “there he goes! Look up there see, past the trees.”

We all craned our necks to no avail.

There was no sign of Santa Claus, the cutter or the reindeer in the clear night sky. Then my brother, Ben, yelled, “look, he left a sack!”

And sure enough there was a flour sack sitting by the chimney, Ben ran to the corner of the house and started to climb up.

“No, wait,” Uncle said grabbing him. “You can’t touch it, it’s magic remember. Go back to bed right now and you’ll get your presents in the morning. If you touch the sack now we’ll lose everything.”

So off to bed we went, falling asleep immediately knowing that yes, indeed, Santa had been to our house. It never once occurred to us to wonder what Dad and our uncles were doing lying in a heap on the ground.

In the morning our stockings were full to overflowing. An apple and an orange, I’d never tasted anything so wonderful in my life. Hard candy in all colors and yes a red jackknife and a bottle of “Lilly of the Valley” perfume. I was ecstatic. If I stopped fighting with my brothers and listened to every single thing my mom said and never talked back, goodness knows what I would get next year.

Well, I fell in love with Santa Claus and was caught hook, line and sinker in the whole glitz and glitter of a capitalist Christmas and life was never the same in my road allowance childhood or my adult urban life.

I spend money like there’s no tomorrow. I love to give presents. My house glitters and twinkles and is as tacky as can be. For a pagan socialist woman I have every possible glittering and tacky ornament you can buy at antiques stores, Wal-Mart and Dollarama and that’s not counting the stuff I’ve saved since childhood. You know, the scard up glass balls with peeling paint. The baby Jesus and Virgin Mary with her broken head that’s been glued so much I’ve lost count of the times. The wise men carved by an old Ukrainian man in Alberta in the 1960s, a glittering angel and yards and yards of tinsel.

There are Christmas cards hanging from string strung across the room, some of them new but most of them go all the way back to 1950s. I never throw anything away. The only thing I don’t have is a silver Christmas tree and an inflatable Santa.

Ever since 1946 every Christmas has been either a joyous one full of excited shopping, baking and cooking or a lowdown poor as a church mouse Christmas. I am an artist and money can be pretty scarce at times. I remember one year when there was very little money but I had managed to scrape enough together to buy small gifts and to pick up a real cheap turkey, cheap because it had no drumsticks. When I put it on the table my son looking really pitiful said, “This is the poorest Christmas we’ve ever had, right Mom?”

“Not really,” I replied. “We’ve had poorer ones.”

“No mom, this is the poorest,” he said.

“Cause there’s nothing as poor as a turkey with no drumsticks.”

But this year there will be no glitz or glitter as I have not only weaned myself of Christmas shopping or at least I am trying too, but I have also downsized and I actually threw out several boxes of shiny things including that poor Virgin Mary. Now back to my question, do you ever wonder where Santa came from?

Well, some call it appropriation but its really the theft by Coca-Cola of a people’s folk hero. The story is that some time in the fourth century there was a kind and generous man in the country now known as Turkey, who went around giving gifts of food and clothes to underprivileged children. He became known as St. Nicholas and he kept evolving from country to country then sometime in the 1600s he immigrated with the Dutch to North America … New York to be exact. They called him Sinter Claus.

He was appropriated in the early 1930s by Coca-Cola, who fattened him up, gave him a new red suit, rosy cheeks, twinkling blue eyes and a ho ho ho. With a bottle of Coke in his hand he has smiled and twinkled at us from magazines and billboards throughout out the Depression years to today and has entrenched himself and Coca-Cola forever in our psyche, so much so that he has become what Christmas is all about. That’s real sad isn’t it?

Have a good Christmas and a happy New Year.
“I encourage every Canadian to get the H1N1 flu vaccine.”

Dr. David Butler-Jones  
Chief Public Health Officer of Canada

- Getting vaccinated is a safe and effective way to protect yourself and others against the H1N1 flu virus.

- Canada has enough vaccine for everyone.

« J’encourage tous les Canadiens à recevoir le vaccin contre la grippe H1N1. »

Dr’ David Butler-Jones  
Administrateur en chef de la santé publique du Canada

- La vaccination est un moyen sûr et efficace de vous protéger et de protéger vos proches contre le virus de la grippe H1N1.

- Le Canada a suffisamment de doses de vaccin pour tout le monde.

For information on flu clinics throughout your province  
go to www.health.gov.sk.ca  
or call 1-877-800-0002 (toll-free).

Pour des renseignements sur les cliniques de vaccination contre la grippe de votre province, allez au www.health.gov.sk.ca  
or appelez 1-877-800-0002 (sans frais).

For more information about the H1N1 flu vaccine  
visit  
www.fightflu.ca  
or call  
1 800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232)  
TTY 1-800-926-9105

Pour en savoir plus sur le vaccin contre la grippe H1N1  
visitez  
www.combatezlagrippe.ca  
ou composez le  
1 800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232)  
ATS 1-800-926-9105
After an online competition, voters across the Métis homeland have decided on the logo to represent the 125th Anniversary of the Battle of Batoche in 2010.

The winning entry was designed by Saskatoon’s Murray Lindsay who has decades of graphics art experience and has done lots of work for Métis organizations in Saskatchewan. He was honoured to have his design chosen.

“It’s a great thrill,” said Lindsay. “I do graphic design work for Métis organizations like the Clarence Campeau Development Fund and the John Arcand Fiddle Fest. Having my logo represent such a noteworthy date in Métis culture is like an award for ‘doing it right’. I’m very happy.”

Lindsay is not Métis, but as he says he has inspiration close to home.

“My wonderful wife is (Métis) and through her, my knowledge and appreciation of Métis culture has grown 100 per cent.”

Lindsay says that designing logos is always a fun challenge and he says that a logo has to catch the eye and explain itself in about a half second.

“I figured for this logo, I tried to distill the essential elements of this Northwest Resistance Anniversary. One hundred and twenty-five years had to be featured and something that said “Métis,” added Lindsay.

“Of the selection of Métis icons, some have been used pretty extensively, some are shared with other unrelated organizations and some would lose their impact if the logo was shrunk, say, to fit on a business card.

“Finally, I decided the blue and white Métis infinity flag was the way to go. It boldly proclaims ‘Métis’ without confusion and its own long history links well to the period being honoured.”

Lindsay is passionate about his craft and the detail and thought that go into his work.

“After that spark hit me, the rest of the procedure was a matter of details. The numeral ‘1’ made a great flagpole. I found a font with an elegant and antique feel. The phrase, Remember with Pride, matches my thoughts on not just remembering the events of Batoche, but all the progress the Métis have made in a century and a quarter.”

The logo that Lindsay created will now be used around all events and memorabilia tied to the 125 Anniversary. He will also receive a prize of $2,000.

Second place went to Carla Joseph of Prince George B.C. and third went to Sean Hargreves. They will receive $1,000 and $500 respectively.
Unlimited BlackBerry® Plans for Everyone

$15/mo.
UNLIMITED E-mail & Instant Messaging

$40/mo.
UNLIMITED Internet
UNLIMITED E-mail
UNLIMITED Instant Messaging
UNLIMITED Text Messaging
PLUS Voice Mail and Call Display

Add an UNLIMITED calling plan starting at just $20/mo.*
• UNLIMITED Evening & Weekend Calling  • 300 Weekday Minutes
• UNLIMITED local cell-to-cell calling with over 530,000 SaskTel cell customers

*Plus a monthly system administration fee of $6.25 and a 911 fee of 59¢.

GET MORE!

Bundle & Save!
Visit a SaskTel Authorized Dealer or SaskTel Store
sasktel.com | 1-800-SASKTEL

Available to new and existing customers on a monthly, two or three year term. A $5.50 activation fee applicable with new service activation or upgrade. A prepaid cellular calling plan transferred over activates to an unlimited BlackBerry plan. The calling plan and unlimited BlackBerry plan must have a contract length of the same length and in the same province. Minimum minutes apply. Minimum minutes applicable with SaskTel monthly plan. Prepaid plans do not include caller ID, long distance calls, wireless-to-wireless minutes, SaskTel data plan, SaskTel data plan minutes, long distance calls or roaming minutes and calls are free provided to residents in Western Canada and are subject to availability and restrictions. The plans are not available in the Yukon, Territories and Nunavut. Check your supply and network availability in these areas prior to signing up.
Song opens door for hope and respect

From Stilettos to Moccasins sounds anthem of honour

By Andréa Ledding
For Eagle Feather News

Sharing academic research in a participant-created music video isn’t standard practice – but it may be a breakthrough finding.

"From Stilettos to Moccasins" – a song and music video available on the YouTube website – came about after a five-year community-based project led by University of Saskatchewan sociologist Colleen Dell, Research Chair in Substance Abuse. Team members included academic researchers, elders, treatment providers, and Aboriginal women healing from drug abuse, addictions and problems with the law.

"Knowing and experiencing gets you to where you are," said Dell of the women who were the focus of the project.

“And that’s what we tried to do with the song as well – it fits the Indigenous view but not necessarily the Western – you need to "feel" before you get it, and that’s when change is going to happen.

“And with song, that happens.”

During a retreat at Cedar Lodge, about 30 participants were guided in writing the song by award-winning recording artist Violet Naytowhow, who then arranged and performed it.

"Men relate, non-Aboriginals relate – it’s about the spirit and overcoming and finding about who you need to be and where you are," Dell said, adding feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. “It’s about hope and respect and inspiration.”

The song was important as a healing form of comfort and reciprocity to the participants. Dell, originally from Winnipeg, spoke of the importance of doing research respectfully.

“We’re missing a huge amount of understanding that comes from lived experience," Dell noted. Their starting point was three women writing out their stories. “That became part of the interview guide, or storytelling guide, really. Acknowledging the voice and experience which is typically silenced – that was the underpinning of the project.”

Although they are only at the beginning of post-project findings, a key was knowing that women feel silenced and disrespected, largely due to racism and discrimination.

“One of the best ways to have the women’s voices heard is through song and music,” Dell said.

The video, debuted at the “Issues of Substance” conference in Halifax during Addictions Awareness Week in November, was mainly Saskatoon-created by videographers Angela Edmunds and Marcel Petit.

The U of S project, which grew from 11 to 30 team members, was funded by the Canadian Institute of Health Research, the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation, and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse and involved interviewing 138 Aboriginal women from across Canada.

Dell said the restorative cure of culture in protecting and grounding Aboriginal women against externally imposed labels like “drug addict” or “prostitute” was what seemed crucial in the healing journey – identity and stigma.

Cultural identity means no longer being alone or lost, feelings that turn people to drugs in order to cope, and Dell hopes to incorporate this knowledge into treatment centre programming.

“The identity that the Creator gave you that can’t be taken away – once that is understood, once that is known how much Aboriginal women have to be proud of and to understand the history of where they are today on an individual basis – that’s critical.”
December is a time for reflection for me. I think about the year gone by and then I start thinking of the past and some of the decisions I have made.

My parents told me that life is a series of choices, some good and some bad. Many of us remember making some of the toughest choices before we were old enough to vote. Some quit school – not the smartest choice. Some, like me, eventually went back to school.

As I look back on my life, I see that my friends had more influence on many of those early choices I made, even some of the gifts I bought.

If I could do it over I would make different choices. Everything is clearer when we are looking back. I don’t envy the youth of today, for the world has changed.

They have way more information available at their fingertips – computers, internet, and television. Lots of advice, but should we be getting advice from television? I am not saying that you should make your choices based on television programs, Internet advice and radio programs, but consider using all the information you can get your hands on to make the really important decisions in your life. Chances are if it doesn’t feel like the right choice – it probably isn’t.

Remember, that some choices will affect the rest of your life, so choose wisely. We have to find a balance between what our mind tells us and what our hearts want us to do. Somewhere in between the two is the right choice.

In our ever-changing world there will always be choices. Spend some time thinking about what you want from your life and find the path to get you there. Be aware and be careful. Make good choices and enjoy the time the Creator has given us.

Your friends and family may not always like the choices you make. You may not like the choices you make. Know that you are not alone. We all are in the same predicament when it comes to choices and at the end of the day we are the ones that will have to live with the choices we made.

In this world of vast choices, I will share what I have found helpful in my life. Laughter! Take time to laugh and enjoy life because it truly is a gift.

There are other parts of your life that are more deserving of your energy and attention, right here, right now. I have found laughter to be the best medicine. Humour is a universal language. It’s a contagious emotion and a natural diversion. Best of all it is free and has no known side effects.

Tune into your favourite sitcom on television. Read a funny book. Call a friend and chuckle for a few minutes. It even helps to force a laugh once in a while. You’ll find your stress melting away almost instantly.

Laughter is one of the easiest ways to free you from the mind’s constant thought process and find inner peace. It will make you more alive, healthier, and more creative. Just relax. You will discover you have a natural talent for loving life. Remember to laugh a lot every day.

Tis the season to be jolly! Tis the season to be grochousy – more like it.

People are out and about shopping for gifts for their friends and family but not too many of them are very jolly.

I think that Christmas shopping has become a full contact sport and a way of venting your past year’s frustrations on poor unsuspecting shoppers who have the gall to be smiling and happy.

You get bumped in the back of the leg with shopping carts, wait in long line-ups, listen to parents telling their children to “put that down” and “no, I’m not buying that”, and the classic, “I’m never bringing you shopping again.”

This society we live in has created a huge holiday where we feel obligated to buy gifts and in the process we forget about the meaning of the holiday. In my family it’s not so much the gifts but it’s the food, family, canasta, food, friends and food again. My grandkids still want everything they see on TV commercials.

We can thank the wonderful shopping centres, toy distributors and manufacturers for making sure that our children and grandchildren can start telling us what they want for Christmas the day after Halloween!

Don’t get sucked in by the whole marketing campaign. Don’t put off paying your utilities and other bills because some big store company wants to make billions of dollars over this holiday season. The greatest gifts we can give each other is our time.

I enjoy reading your emails and letters. Snail mail: Eagle Feather News c/o Sandee Sez, P.O. Box 924 Station Main, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3M4. You can also email me at sandra.ahenakew@gmail.com

Making the right decisions even tougher at Christmas
A traditionally delicious evening was held on Oct. 29 at the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre, with the company of almost 40 international researchers from New Zealand, Australia, Africa, the US, Germany and Austria, as well as from across Canada.

Many were Indigenous peoples themselves, some were academics, and others were graduate students. The staff at the Centre prepared a meal that had mouths watering.

Some of the traditional dishes prepared were duck soup, moose meat, bison, prairie chicken, smoked white fish, baked and fried bannock as well as Saskatoon Berry Pie and some wild blueberries with ice cream. This traditional meal was created by the SIMFC staff, May Henderson and Angela Rancourt and was served by Paul Koo, Chris Passley, Kathie Pruden-Nansel and Larry Okamee.

The group was here for a workshop on Oct. 29, Indigenous Urbanization Internationally, sponsored by Indigenous Peoples Knowledge and Rights Commission of the International Geographical Union. They were also treated to soup and bannock the previous day and learned a lot about the Friendship Centre and the amount of activity going on at the facility.

Later that evening they were entertained by the Calling Bear Dance Troupe, (Strongarms), Lawrence Roy Jr., and his sons Devin and Alex, Faye Maurice demonstrated the Métis jig along with Warren Isbister.

Dallas and Philip Boyer played fiddle music and Mel Vandale and Lenny Dumont accompanied them. The guests joined in on the fun for the Red River Jig and shared plenty of laughs while experiencing parts of our rich and dynamic culture.

SIMFC would like to thank the friends of the Centre for their donations of the traditional meats. Anna and Lauren Corrigal of Ile la Crosse and Davis Santosi for the moose meat, duck, prairie chickens and the wild blueberries.

We would also like to thank Dr. Evelyn Peters for choosing the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre for holding such a special event here.

SIMFC would like to thank the friends of the Centre for the traditional meats, Anna and Lauren Corrigal of Ilela Crosse and Davis Santosi for the moose meat, duck, prairie chickens and the wild blueberries.

We would also like to thank Dr. Evelyn Peters for choosing the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre for holding such a special event here.

The Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre was the venue for a gathering of international guests who enjoyed a taste of local culture.
GDI big winner at Book Awards

By Andréa Ledding
For Eagle Feather News

Heading into 2010, Year of the Métis, Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) and Dr. Jo-Ann Episkenew dominated the 2009 Saskatchewan Book Awards with eight nominations and four wins out of fourteen categories, between them.

“It’s always nice to be shortlisted. About a quarter of the books make the short list, so it’s a big thrill,” noted Karon Shmon of GDI.

Dancing In My Bones won The First Peoples’ Publishing Award and, by acclamation, in a new category, First Nations’ Writing. Episkenew’s book was nominated in First Book, Non-Fiction, and Scholarly Writing – winning in the latter against four scholars.

“Those people shortlisted in Scholarly Writing were all senior and well-known – it was a bit of a shock,” admitted Episkenew in a phone interview from Regina, adding she proudly donned her Métis sash but humbly avoided a pre-written acceptance speech.

“It was most important to me that non-academic people could understand my book.”

Her husband ran into some old friends with limited formal education who said they had read, Taking Back Our Spirits: Indigenous Literature, Public Policy, And Healing.

“They could read and put into context a lot of the problems in their lives,” said Episkenew, noting the importance of validation.

“There are historical and legal reasons for these experiences – most people know this, but to have it in a book – it’s a powerful thing.”

She added that GDI “really cleaned up” – something Saskatchewan Book Award’s official press release noted, calling GDI “the big winner of the evening” for their five-time nominated children’s book about a young man discovering his Métis heritage.

Authors Wilfred Burton – a literacy co-ordinator – and Anne Patton – a children’s literature professor – joined illustrator Sherry Farrell Racette and Michif translator Norman Fleury to create the bilingual English-Michif recordings and quality work GDI is known for. Shmon also credited the hard work of Publishing Department’s David Morin, and GDI’s Board of Governors.

“It was deemed the best book for the way it looks and the content – a very high accolade,” noted Shmon, adding GDI’s goal is to preserve and share the Michif language.

“But when you look at the competition – it’s kind of humbling.”

Reader’s Choice winner was Marlene Millar from Birch Narrows Dené Nation for Dené Honü – Stories from the People – stiff competition with eight nominations including GDI – their other nomination was for “Publishing in Education”.

Other nominees included Kakwa Publishing. Shmon said the overall representation of First Nations writers and books demonstrated inclusiveness and growth in the Awards in recognizing subtleties.

“It’s just overall wonderful, to see Aboriginal authors and Aboriginal focused books do so well. The nominations are reflective of not only our demographic in the province, but the quality of what is being produced.”

Episkenew agrees, and advises other writers to “Find a way to be yourself – there is a way to be yourself and to yet be part of this giant conversation.”

The Giving Tree: A Retelling of a Traditional Métis Story™ is GDI’s latest offering, just in time for the Christmas season. Written and illustrated by multi-talented Métis visual artist and instructor Leah Dorian from Prince Albert, this colourfully illustrated picture book shares the childhood memories of a Mooshoom, while conveying the core values and beliefs of Michif culture: positive relationships with others, and a connection with the Creator, and Mother Earth. Following in GDI’s tradition of award-winning children’s books like “Dancing In My Bones”, a Michif-Cree translation is included on each page, and the CD audio component at the back.
The Aboriginal People’s Television Network (APTN) recently broadcast Blackstone—a TV show pilot about corruption and politics on a fictional First Nation.

Written by Gil Cardinal, Blackstone was produced by Prairie Dog Film + Television and recently screened at the American Indian Film Festival in San Francisco where it received four nominations: Best Live Short, Best Actress (Carmen Moore), Best Supporting Actress (Michele Thrush) and Best Supporting Actor (Eric Shweig). Thrush walked away with the hardware.

Executive producer and director Ron E. Scott thinks Blackstone is a TV show many people can relate to. “The core of the story will resonate with many different people, not just Aboriginal, because if you have the courage to drill down deep enough, every type of community, at one point or another, faces tragedy and internal crisis,” he said.

Blackstone’s all-star cast is rounded out by Gordon Tootoosis and Nathaniel Arcand and includes newcomer Natalie Supernault. The pilot premiered on APTN in November and a follow-up broadcast is tentatively planned for January.

Blackstone executive is hopeful the show will be made into an hour-long TV drama in the very near future.

Mixed Blessings is another series produced by Prairie Dog Film + Television and broadcast on APTN. The show is about a Cree/Ukrainian mixed family who live in a culturally dysfunctional household.

The show airs Tuesdays at 8:30 p.m. on APTN

Rabbit Fall Wins SMPIA Award

Rabbit Fall: Season 2 recently received some recognition at the Saskatchewan Motion Picture Industry Association Showcase Awards. The show won for Best Dramatic Series and actress Andrea Menard won for Best Performance – Female Lead.

Executive producers Bob Crowe and Wally Start thanked all the cast and crew that made the shows possible and say they hope to be in production of Rabbit Fall: Season 3 this spring.

Wapos Bay received eight nominations but, surprisingly, walked away empty handed. Dennis Jackson and Trevor Cameron had episodes of Wapos Bay nominated in the same category: Best Script. But both of them lost to a SaskTel commercial.

“I have to admit it was weird losing to an animated commercial. But at least Dennis didn’t win,” Cameron said with a laugh.

The Kohkums are back!

Be sure to get down to see the latest edition of SNTC’S ‘A Rez Christmas Carol’, December 8-18 at the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 919 20th Street in Saskatoon. This year the first play of the series has been re-worked by playwright Curtis Peteetuce, director/dramaturge Rob Roy and dramaturge/lighting designer Kenneth Charlette.

In the play, Kiweitnook First Nation’s Christmas bonus cheques are not delivered when a bitter, disgruntled band office manager loses her Christmas spirit. It isn’t until she’s visited by spirits representing the four directions that things look up for everyone.

‘A Rez Christmas Carol’ features Krystle Pederson, Lance Laroque, Jennifer Bishop, Aaron Shingoose and Waylon Machiskinic.

Tickets are $20 for adults and $18 for students and seniors. Call SNTC at 933-2262 for more information.

Some Christmas Cheer

I always enjoy it when writers and columnists give a Christmas shout out to the people that made their year enjoyable, possible and a little easier. Maybe it’s lame or a lazy way to fill some column space during an extremely busy time of year but I truly believe it’s important. And I’ve never dedicated any ink to the people who make it possible for me to follow my dreams.

Thank you to my amazing, beautiful and extremely pregnant partner Courtney; my incredibly talkative and uber-cute son Luka; all my family and friends back in R-town; Muskwa my loyal pooh; Johnny and Dee; Wally and Bob and the whole staff at Angel Entertainment; Trevor Cameron; Peter Lauterman; Jordan Wheeler; my granola crunching neighbors; Liz Denny; Dennis and Melanie Jackson of Wapos Bay; the Métis man-about-town (aka Marcel Petit); the staff at Big Soul Productions; Jean Du Toit and staff at Buffalo Gals Pictures; the readers of Eagle Feather News; Vanessa Loewen of APTN; last and definitely least my fat, lazy and excessively overweight cat, Vern.

And to all a good night! See ya next year!
Youths find jobs in urban art program

By Blue Pelletier
For Eagle Feather News

This art showcase is not your typical show. It is the ninth installment of the Saskatoon Urban Canvas Project.

It’s a program that takes youth who have been struggling to find employment and gives them opportunities through art. After the first two months of the 39-week course the artists showcase their talents in a real live studio showing. It’s a chance to acknowledge sponsors, and show off the talents and exhibits of the youth involved in the program.

The success of the program is usually measured by numbers. Fifty per cent of all students who graduate from the program find employment and 39 per cent end up going back to school.

But Darryl Lechman says the benefits go beyond that. The program helps kids with their personal development.

“Sure, kids are nervous, some didn’t even show up. The ones that went through it were into it and it was a real eye opener for the kids,” Lechman says.

The youth who were there were excited to show off their skills and artwork to all in attendance. There people from the public and there was also a lot of family.

Once the showcase is over Lechman says there is a noticeable increase in attendance.

“Through perseverance these people have expressed themselves proudly, showcasing Aboriginal talent through music displays our history, our passions and experiences,” Lonechild said.

Buffy St. Marie, an adoptee to the United States from the Piapot First Nation, was presented the inaugural APCA Lifetime Achievement Award.

“Saskatchewan has world-class talent, showcasing our people with trailblazers of the past such as Buffy St. Marie, who blazed a trail for the up and coming artistes, Andrea Menard, Chester Knight and the Wind, and new and contemporary artistes such as Joey Stylz.

“The kids start to realize the significance of what they are involved in. How the community comes out to support the arts.”

Youth in the program learn to develop strong ties and friendships with others involved.

Graduation for this year’s group of students is May 28. It will give the youth another chance to showcase their art to the public.

And to speak about their experiences, both good and bad with the program. Also give their thoughts to the audience.

If you would like more information about SCYAP and their programs contact Darryl or Tammy at (306) 652-7760.

Red Bull receives unexpected honour at Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Awards

By Gord Petruic
For Eagle Feather News

Red Bull was awarded the Best Pow Wow CD Traditional Award.

Their album Gold included singers Edmund Bull, Derek Bull, Toey Bull, Coleman Bull, Troy Moosuk, Mathew Thomas, Melvin Eyahpase, Joe Littlewolf, Brian Waskewitch, Delia Waskewitch, Irvin Waskewitch.

Manager and Drum Keeper Edmund Bull feels good about this unexpected honour.

“I didn’t even know we were nominated til two or three weeks ago and it feels really good to win this award for the fourth time.”

FSIN Chief Guy Lonechild was on hand to present the Aboriginal Song Writer of the year award. Chief Lonechild, fresh off his victory in the FSIN election said, “Saskatchewan has world-class talent, showcasing our people with trailblazers of the past such as Buffy St. Marie, who blazed a trail for the up and coming artistes, Andrea Menard, Chester Knight and the Wind, and new and contemporary artistes such as Joey Stylz.

“Through perseverance these people have expressed themselves proudly, showcasing Aboriginal talent through music displays our history, our passions and experiences,” Lonechild said.

Buffy St. Marie, an adoptee to the United States from the Piapot First Nation, was presented the inaugural APCA Lifetime Achievement Award.

“It was very inspirational, and the Aboriginal people I meet across the country, the Elders, the musicians, and the fans continue to inspire me as a musician, I can’t even describe how I feel, just touched.”

Congratulations to Joey Stylz for Best Music Video, Andrea Menard for Best International Artist and Yvonne St. Germaine for best Gospel CD, who where all presented awards during First Night the pre-awards show.

The SCYAP students are trained in many different disciplines.

Youth in the program learn to develop strong ties and friendships with others involved.

Graduation for this year’s group of students is May 28. It will give the youth another chance to showcase their art to the public.

And to speak about their experiences, both good and bad with the program. Also give their thoughts to the audience.

If you would like more information about SCYAP and their programs contact Darryl or Tammy at (306) 652-7760.

If you would like more information about SCYAP and their programs contact Darryl or Tammy at (306) 652-7760.
New book passes along First Nation protocols

By Sheena Findlay
For Eagle Feather News

A first-of-its-kind book about First Nations traditional protocols is now available. Cultural Teachings: First Nations Protocols & Methodologies was launched by the Saskatchewan Indian Culture Centre (SICC) in Saskatoon in early December.

The book provides information about protocols for First Nations ceremonies and traditional gatherings – like how one should approach an Elder, and the importance of offering tobacco to an Elder.

Sylvia McAdam is the primary author and researcher of the book. She stresses that the book attempts to answer questions surrounding proper protocol in a general matter, taking into account all First Nations in Saskatchewan.

“All First Nations share a lot of the general protocol, like tobacco – which is almost a universal protocol. That is what this book will speak to … it tells the reader the proper protocols of how to go into a ceremony or a feast,” said McAdam who specialized in Indigenous Law at the University of Saskatchewan.

McAdam says Elders have requested that this information be passed down to younger generations. She said the book will preserve their teachings and knowledge.

“This is a hope and dream of many of the Elders that are in this book. They hope that this knowledge will carry on to the future,” she said.

Dorothy Myo, president of SICC, is the driving force behind the book. She said the idea came after she noticed the lack of resources available on the subject.

“This book has risen out of a need to have a resource for First Nations youth to learn about their culture. It will help them have a pathway to access this knowledge about their culture; about things relating to their identity as First Nations people,” Myo said.

Myo thinks the book addresses this need and leaves people wanting to know more.

“I hope it piques their knowledge to learn more. To really get into learning more about their heritage, backgrounds, the significance of these ceremonies. When they learn about their ceremonies, they have to learn their language in order to access some of this knowledge. That is the key behind all this,” said Myo.

The book will be making its way into the hands of students this winter.

Shannon Avison is the department head of the Indian Communications Arts (INCA) Program at the First Nations University in Regina. She said the book will be a useful tool for her Intercultural Leadership Course – Cultural and Leadership Camp – offered this winter.

“It’s what our students need so they’re not afraid to go to ceremonies and so they can feel they can access Elders, and know how to bring tobacco and what that really means. The book will help them feel they can participate in the traditional aspects of their culture,” she said.

Avison said the book is a resource unlike any that’s been available to students before.

“The whole idea is that people will receive a formal instruction that will allow them to pursue traditional instruction. Before when we taught this class we didn’t have that. Before, we never had a proper selection,” said Avison.

And getting students and young people to read the book is what McAdam is hoping for.

“Colonization and residential schools have impacted how we transmit and transfer our knowledge. This book will recognize this knowledge. I hope that the youth and the generations to come will benefit from this knowledge on paper form,” said McAdam.

The book is available at the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre and will soon be available online at www.sicc.sk.ca.
Students who are part of the Construction Technology Pathway at E.D. Feehan High School in Saskatoon have built a ready-to-move home for the Whitecap Dakota First Nation. The official unveiling of the home was Dec. 4.

Whitecap Chief Darcy Bear was on hand to help sign the agreement between his First Nation as well as the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Board and Breck Scaffold Solutions.

Royan Stewart from Breck Scaffold Solutions was quite nervous up in front of the crowd and said he “is much more comfortable 60 feet up in the air” which drew laughs from the crowd who were packed into a garage type space where the signing ceremony and unveiling took place.

Once the home was shown, those in attendance, as well as the horde of media members all shuffled outside to get a glimpse of what the students had accomplished.

It is a single level home with no basement. The work the kids did was quite impressive and the home looked just like any other you may see built in your own neighbourhood.

Students who are enrolled in the Pathway program gain valuable skills that will assist them in finding a career in the construction trade.

It is partners like Whitecap, Breck Scaffold, and the Greater Saskatoon School board that make these types of opportunities possible. They have provided materials and space that allow projects like this to succeed.

Students will gain 300 apprentice-ship hours through this program. Hopefully, by doing so it encourages more of the graduates to consider a career in one of the many construction trades.

The program is open to all students who are part of the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School system. This last fall students came from three different high schools to be a part of this project.

It was the recognition from Breck Scaffold that got the ball rolling. They recognized the need for all the students involved that they needed their own project to work on. So once they met with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner they found a willing partner in Whitecap Dakota First Nation.

And now someone on Whitecap will benefit and have a brand new home to live in.
Saskatchewan Indian and Gaming Authority (SIGA) recently handed out $25,000 to deserving students as part of their First Nations Scholarship Awards.

SIGA President and CEO Zane Hansen feels the program goes a long way in helping First Nations students with their educational pursuits.

“The SIGA First Nations Scholarship Awards program provides opportunities to encourage education and continued learning. It also helps students successfully achieve career goals within SIGA and the broader community.”

Hansen added there’s no obligation from the student to work for SIGA once they’re finished their studies but admits they wouldn’t be turned away.

“Whether SIGA can be a jumping off point or a place students want to develop a successful career, we would be delighted if the scholarship winners chose us as their place of employment once they complete their programs,” Hansen said.

Scholarships are open to First Nations entering or continuing their education. Two scholarships of $5,000 are awarded to students enrolled in IT, Commerce or Hospitality and Tourism Management. There are two $2,500 scholarships to students in Communications or Electronics and ten $1,000 scholarships to students in any other field.

Sharidy Desnomie and Vanessa Peigan were both awarded the $5,000 scholarships and are very grateful for the help.

“This just alleviates so much stress,” said Desnomie after being honored at a press conference in Saskatoon.

“It (the scholarship) enables me to concentrate on my studies and not worry about money.”

Peigan agrees.

“I am so thankful for winning a SIGA scholarship. I think there should be more scholarships to encourage education. (I’m) happy this avenue has been made available, especially with the cost of living being so high.”

Scholarship winners are chosen by a selection committee who base their decision on the student’s commitment to their field of choice, their level of community participation and their need for financial assistance.

Applications for the 2010 SIGA First Nations Scholarship Awards will be available in April on SIGA’s website: www.siga.sk.ca
First Nation and Métis employment development took centre stage recently at North Battleford’s Sakewew High School.

A large and diverse group of community, business, and First Nation and government officials met to sign a formal commitment to the economic prosperity of Aboriginal people.

“This chance to gather at Sakewew High School in the name of increased Aboriginal employment is encouraging,” First Nations and Métis Relations Minister Bill Hutchinson said.

“Partnerships with First Nations, schools, the community and employers are precisely how we will meet Saskatchewan’s growing labour demands.”

Sakewew High School signed the agreement with the province and a range of community partners. The school is governed under a joint partnership between the public and separate school systems and the Battlefords Tribal Council.

“Battlefords First Nations Joint Board of Education is pleased to sign the agreement,” Chairman Bud Bohun said. “We appreciate the support of the Ministry of First Nations and Métis Relations and its continued work to promote strong community relations.”

Battlefords Tribal Council also signed on to the agreement as a key partner.

“With the economic growth happening in the Battlefords, it is essential that a structured network is in place to address issues around training, employment and economic opportunities,” Battlefords Tribal Council Chief Executive Officer John Wallace said. “This partnership agreement is a great opportunity to see this come to fruition.”

North Battleford’s newly appointed Mayor Ian Hamilton, voiced enthusiasm for renewing the city’s commitment to a representative workforce.

“The City of North Battleford continues to work toward reducing and eliminating barriers in the workplace,” Hamilton said. “We are pleased to partner with other community organizations who are dedicated to the same goals.”

In 2005, The City of North Battleford was Saskatchewan’s first urban municipality to sign an Aboriginal Employment Development Partnership with the province.

The federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs also signed this agreement.

Through Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative agreements, the Government of Canada is working to promote employment partnerships as part of its commitment to helping Aboriginal people build strong, healthy and self-reliant communities.

All partners to this agreement will work to identify and address barriers to training, hiring and retaining First Nations and Métis people.

Saskatchewan’s Aboriginal Employment Development initiative is focused on bringing the largely untapped First Nations and Métis workforce into the province’s growing economy.

Patrick Bugler, representative workforce coordinator at Sakewew High School, presents Assistant Deputy Minister James Froh with an Allen Sapp painting on behalf of the school. (Photo supplied)
Aboriginal arts and craft sale just in time for Christmas shoppers and artisans

By Jennifer Dubois
For Eagle Feather News

The First Nations University of Canada campus in Regina was filled with tables showcasing Aboriginal arts and crafts. And it was for a good cause.

Vanea Cyr has been beading for 20 years. She and a few other crafters put together their first Winter Solstice craft sale, Nov. 14 and Dec. 5.

“There are three of us who are local crafters. We saw a void in the craft market that there wasn’t a whole lot of First Nations and Métis venues to display our work. We wanted to provide other crafters and artisans a place to showcase their work and to offer a venue at low cost,” said Cyr.

Cyr was grateful to get the space for free and have other Aboriginal artists come out for the event.

The money and donations raised at the craft sale will be assisting students in need. Cyr said she is happy to help students over the holidays.

“Being a student myself, I know how hard it is to live on a fixed income and stuff like that. Our admission is a non-perishable food item for food hampers. A small donation will go to support the food hampers for Christmas,” she said.

Grace Stevenson, one of the event organizers, has been sewing and makes tipis for more than 16 years. She’s hoping the craft sale will support local Aboriginal artists.

“We want to do this every year if we can and we want to see more crafters come out and do their stuff and show their best and extend their talents. We’d like to see people reach back and resurrect some old talents, like basket weaving and sweet grass weaving and lots of beading” She said.

Stevenson says it was a great turnout – as there were more than 15 tables for the event.

“For a first time, I think we did alright considering we didn’t have a budget for our advertising and everything was word of mouth and our own inkjet printer,” Stevenson said.

Like Stevenson, Cyr hopes the event will be successful to carry on each year. She said it is something that is needed.

“There are no local shops really, that focus on First Nations and Métis arts and crafts so we are hoping for great things to come out of it,” said Cyr.
Citizenship was a major issue at this year’s Métis Nation Legislative and Annual General Assembly held in Saskatoon in November.

The two-day assembly kicked off on Nov. 15, with opening comments from dignitaries such as the newly elected chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) Chief Guy Lonechild, who pointed to the McIvor case, noting First Nations and Métis people have the right to determine who is a citizen. Lonechild also spoke about the benefit of being a united front.

“If we work together, good things happen.”

Métis National Council President Clem Chartierechoed Lonechild’s sentiments.

“We determine who is a citizen … the government needs to leave it up to us.”

Rounding out opening remarks was an address by Métis Nation – Saskatchewan (MN-S) President Robert Doucette who applauded Lonechild’s presence, saying last year the previous chief addressed the banquet but did not attend the MNLA. He was pleased that for the first time ever, the FSIN chief attended and addressed the assembly.

Near the end of his comments, Doucette spoke directly to Chartier, with whom he has publicly sparred.

“I’ve treated you badly in the past. For that, I am sorry. I will stand beside you.”

Much discussion was generated when a resolution was presented that said citizenship applications could be signed by local area directors or presidents, something Robert Lafontaine from Eastern Region 2A spoke out against. He said there had been previous instances where area directors or presidents had axes to grind.

“There have been abuses in the past where Métis citizens have not been recognized by their local presidents or their area directors.

“And I know the direction that we’re trying to go in is citizenship is an objective process where people can apply for Métis citizenship without having to deal with the political process.”

Lafontaine also said allowing area directors or presidents decide who was a Métis citizen defeated the purpose of having a supposedly objective registry.

However, Buffalo Narrows Métis Local President Philip Chartier strongly disagreed and was very vocal in his support for the motion. He argued if you can’t trust your own people to determine who is a Métis citizen, who can you trust?

“Somebody we hire for a couple days? I’m not prepared to put our identification of our members for our region in our local in Buffalo Narrows into the strange hands that don’t even know our people in Northern Saskatchewan.”

Meanwhile, Greg Lawrence, Southern Plains Métis local president, wondered how he would have the time or capability to determine who is a Métis citizen.

“I have the ability to accept them as part of my local, as a member, but not as a Métis citizen. I do not have that right, I think, if somebody declares themselves as a Métis citizen, or the ability to trace their ancestry.”

Lawrence also pointed out he had neither the time nor the resources to trace people’s ancestry.

After a lot of discussion, the motion was defeated with 43 voting against and 38 in favour.

Jason Madden, legal counsel for the MN-S, also spoke about citizenship, noting when it comes to duty to consult or harvesting cases, the Métis Nation should try to negotiate as much as possible, but must have some key elements in place first.

“I think it’s really important that the MN-S continue to move forward on setting up its registry and its Wildlife Act. I can tell you this; that’s going to be key to any negotiations we have. The fact that we have an objectively verifiable registry is going to be necessary and needed.”

Monelle Bailey was officially sworn in as the Métis Women’s representative. Presiding over the ceremony was Métis Senator Nora Cummings and looking on was Senator John Woodward. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)
Educator uses holistic method to train staff

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

Former Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC) director of education, Ida Iron, began a vision for First Nations youth two years ago when she hired Dr. Paul Baker to train her educators using the Circle of Courage model. The Circle of Courage consists of four quadrants that aim to teach youth strength and purpose in a bid to enrich their lives and empower them.

IDA IRON

“Our entire initiative at MLTC began with the communities asking for help on how to deal and interact with the high number of behavior problems in each of the communities,” explains Iron.

“This is what I proposed and we received approval from the MLTC Board of Education to go ahead with a three-year cycle where we are training all teaching staff from the nine (MLTC) bands. So far it has been very well received.”

She first came across the model six years ago and was immediately interested in it, at once linking the teachings to education. Developed by Dr. Larry Breundy, Dr. Martin Brokenleg and Dr. Steve Van Bockern, the Circle of Courage uses the medicine wheel to blend Western thought and Indigenous knowledge.

“It’s based on First Nations’ philosophy,” she says. “Each of the four components works really well within the framework of education.”

“The first area is belonging. For us in education, it means creating a welcoming and safe place for students to go to and be treated with respect by staff who have been trained on how to interact with all people in a manner that is caring and respectful of all,” says Iron.

“The second phase is mastery. This means training a student on a certain skill or skills to the point of mastery, and having them apply the skills they have learned to everyday life.

“This mastery can encompass all teachings and subject areas to the point that when they leave the school they have the confidence and self-esteem to apply all that they have learned to a profession or trade,” Iron says.

“The third phase is independence. Once the student masters the skills, (she or he) has been taught then they become independent learners who can then go out into the workforce and apply their skill and knowledge in whatever profession or trade they are interested in,” she says.

“The last or fourth phase is that of generosity,” says Iron. “Once the student has gone through all three phases then they are in a situation where they are often willing to be involved in giving back to the community in a variety of ways.”

Though no longer the director of education at MLTC, Ida is now the director/principal at Birch Narrows Dene Nation. However, she has been asked by MLTC to continue leading the training sessions for the Circle of Courage, along with Dr. Paul Baker, as it has been met with much success.

Geraldine Rediron, a teacher at Canoe Lake Miskwak School, is a huge fan of the training.

“The Circle of Courage has helped me understand the whole student and where they are coming from,” she says. “It helps me take into consideration the student’s need for belonging, mastery, independence and generosity.

“These are crucial for their academic success. I understand that no learning can occur unless those four items are being addressed and the student’s needs are being met. This knowledge allows me to facilitate learning at an internal, student-centered level,” says Rediron.

“It makes a huge difference from the student’s perspective that teachers are willing to look past their behavior and take the time to help them develop skills that will make them more successful in school.”

Rediron recommends the Circle of Courage model for new teachers.

“Take the training and your classroom management skills will be more effective,” she says.

“You will develop a warm, caring and supportive climate for your students to learn and be responsible learners.”

Though Iron no longer leads the programming, she continues to be involved in a variety of initiatives with the Circle of Courage, working with new teachers and communities to spread the message.

Geraldine Rediron, a teacher at Canoe Lake Miskwak School, is a huge fan of the training.

“The Circle of Courage has helped me understand the whole student and where they are coming from,” she says. “It helps me take into consideration the student’s need for belonging, mastery, independence and generosity.

“These are crucial for their academic success. I understand that no learning can occur unless those four items are being addressed and the student’s needs are being met. This knowledge allows me to facilitate learning at an internal, student-centered level,” says Rediron.

“It makes a huge difference from the student’s perspective that teachers are willing to look past their behavior and take the time to help them develop skills that will make them more successful in school.”

Rediron recommends the Circle of Courage model for new teachers.

“Take the training and your classroom management skills will be more effective,” she says.

“You will develop a warm, caring and supportive climate for your students to learn and be responsible learners.”

PeoplePower.

SASKPOWER CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Looking for an Exciting Career? - SaskPower has it!

POWER LINE TECHNICIAN APPRENTICESHIP POSITIONS

Sask Power’s Power Line technicians play a vital role in bringing electricity to homes and industry in Saskatchewan.

Would you like to work outdoors, learn to climb power poles and become part of our team at SaskPower? SaskPower is looking for enthusiastic people interested in joining our team as Apprentices Power Line Technicians. Successful apprenticeships will result in Journeyman status and allow for a variety of career opportunities within SaskPower.

Minimum qualifications include: Grade 11 with Grade 11 Math and Science or Grade 12 (equivalent) with Grade 11 Math and Science. You must be very physically fit to meet the challenges of physically demanding work in all types of weather. Be capable of working at heights on poles, willing to relocate anywhere.

In the province, and possess a valid Class 5 driver’s license. Apprentice salary for this position starts at $9.44 per hour plus benefits. Journeyed status salary starts at over $27.30 per hour.

SaskPower offers challenging careers, attractive benefits, workplace development, and great opportunities for employees to become involved in their communities.

The closing date for this competition is January 15, 2010.

To be considered for this opportunity, a copy of your high school transcripts, a valid driver’s license, and a driver’s abstract must accompany your resume. If applying online, please mail or fax a copy to 106/154 - 3009

ro no later than January 22, 2010.

Please submit applications online at saskpower.com or send your resume, making clear reference to position #CAAR-104915, to:

SaskPower Career
Attention Sheila, 10th Floor
2025 Victoria Avenue
Regina, SK S4P 3W1

SaskPower values and supports employment equity and workplace diversity. SaskPower hires on merit and welcomes applications from all interested and qualified individuals.
Piapot enters into partnership with SaskTel

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

With the advent of Treaty Land Entitlement, many First Nations were finally able to secure Treaty land where they wanted to. Many took the opportunity to buy land in urban settings and establish enterprise zones to create economic development to benefit their members.

One such urban reserve in Regina is exceeding expectations and growing by leaps and bounds. The Cree Land Mini Mart located at 1101 Angus Street, opened its doors in December 2008, on land owned by the Piapot First Nation. As such, the business is deemed to be on a reserve and is able to offer tax-free products to First Nations people.

And the people came. Known as one of the busiest gas stations in town, the Mini Mart has provided employment and profit for the people of Piapot and has become a go-to-place for everyone in the community.

The success of the Mini Mart drew the attention of the province’s biggest Crown Corporation, SaskTel. Both this large customer base and First Nations presence were among the deciding factors in selecting the Mini-Mart as a kiosk location, says Tracey Lang, Manager - Consumer Sales for SaskTel.

“Reaching the agreement with Cree Land Mini-Mart was a group effort, which included not only SaskTel Sales personnel,” said Lang.

She points to SaskTel’s Terry Bird, Human Resources Manager - Aboriginal Affairs and Mark Thomas, Manager - Consumer Sales as being “instrumental in helping develop the partnership with Cree Land.”

The agreement is in a trial stage for three months, but Chief Rockthunder expects it to continue. The success of the urban reserve location has led to plans for further expansion. They are currently undergoing a feasibility study regarding the parcel of land they own beside the Mini Mart.

“We fully expect to build a four-storey building there with retail, offices, a walk in clinic and hopefully a grocery store,” said Chief Rockthunder.

“I believe in economic development and participating in the economy. Our partnership with SaskTel to sell their goods is one part of the big picture of growth we have for this area.”
It has been seven years since A Proud Generation Calendar began showcasing Aboriginal Youth and their accomplishments. This year the calendar launch was held at the Mackenzie Art Gallery in November. Thirteen students from across Saskatchewan will be featured in the 2010 calendar.

Tracey George-Heese has been running the program since 2003. This year, she decided to give her job to the youth. “They’ve just done a completely totally amazing job,” she said. She figured handing the reins over to youth would be beneficial for them. "It became something for them to learn more about business, more about networking and also to encourage the next generation as well using their youth’s voice,” she said.

George’s passion began after her employment at Scott Collegiate, North Central Regina. After hearing the negative stories about drugs, gangs and violence, George wanted to change that.

She says the calendar showcases aboriginal youth that are making a positive difference. "It’s a powerful acknowledgment for the Aboriginal youth that are making positive healthy choices and living responsible lifestyles”, she said.

Jacob Pratt is one of the students chosen for the 2010 calendar. He is currently a student at the First Nations University in Regina. “I never really considered myself a role model. Traditionally it’s something that you’re placed in and not something you choose. One day people started considering me that and it’s something that I’ve never aimed to get, so I feel pretty good, it’s very flattering,” Pratt said.

He thinks the calendar is a great motivator for aboriginal youth. “I think it’s a really good idea, it’s encouraging to the people that are out there doing good things, it’s good for other young people to see positive role models, and something to look forward to and see that it’s possible to get out there and go do big things and great things” said Pratt.

George-Heese said she hopes the calendar will help erase part of the negative stereotype about aboriginal youth often depicted in the media. “I think youth in general have this stereotype that they drink and they don’t do well, right. But aboriginal youth have even a harder time dealing with those stereotypes. So I wanted to showcase aboriginal youth that are making positive choices,” she said.
Sadore Pelletier has been an Elder at the First Nations University for over 17 years. It may have not been something he expected to do, but he feels he was drawn to it.

“I always want to talk to young people to tell them about our past life, our history as First Nation people. I like working here and the job that I do, it’s working with young people, and I’ve been doing it for quite a while,” he said.

Pelletier is Métis and grew up in the Lestock area of Saskatchewan. After his grandfather died, his family moved into the Road Allowance in 1948.

“We lived there for about nine years, Lestock area. There were about 28 families averaging about four children and no one was allowed to go to school,” he said.

Recalling his days as a youth, he speaks with a smile on his face when he tells the story about his kokum.

“My kokum would come with a little scarf tied over her head, you know. I remember her change was tied in one corner and she would open that little thing there and give me 25 cents, you know, and I was, Oh god, I was rich! But those days I remember very well because those were the best times of my life. And it was so good”, he said.

Pelletier genuinely cares for the students. Sometimes, he finds it emotionally difficult helping them with their problems.

“They keep calling me back but I don’t mind coming and helping them cause that’s what Elders do, that’s what they are there for,” said Pelletier.

Apart of what keeps Pelletier so busy is his office is right in the Atrium at the FNUniv. He welcomes everyone and anyone to come and talk with him.

“I had four people who came and seen me this morning. All that I require, doesn’t matter even just a cigarette is good enough for me, as long as I have something to give back to the Creator, to the spirit world,” Pelletier said.

His inspiration comes from the students he meets every day, and the smile on students faces when teaches them something.

“I’ve always been interested in young people the way some of them have little niches and it makes me feel good to see them doing well. You know, so many good things have happened to me in my life. I’m satisfied. You know if I went tomorrow I would have no regrets,” Pelletier said.
Buffalo Narrows is ready to help stimulate the northern economy in Saskatchewan. The Buffalo Narrows Economic Development Corporation (BNEDC) is building a 30,000 square-foot Town Centre with 20,000 square feet devoted to commercial rental space and 10,000 square feet for retail space. The facility will fill the need for floor space in the area’s crowded commercial rental market. Administrative, retail and construction jobs will be created through this project. The Clarence Campeau Development Fund is providing $1 million in funding, Gabriel Dumont Institute is providing $66,465 and Federal funding of $750,000 is also being provided. (left to right) Steve Danners, Business Development Specialist, Clarence Campeau Development Fund; Gabe Lafond, Chairperson, Gabriel Dumont Technical Institute, and Minister of Education Métis Nation of Saskatchewan; Bobby Woods, Mayor of Buffalo Narrows; Harley Hudson, Chairman, Buffalo Narrows Economic Development Corporation; and Desnethe-Missinippi-Churchill River MP Rob Clarke.
Chief Guy Lonechild says the staff at the FSIN will be doing their part to help Saskatchewan food banks at this time of the year. Every Christmas season pressure is put on food banks to meet the needs of hungry families. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

FSIN staffers chip in to help food bank

Christmas is known as the season for giving, but it is often most difficult on those that can’t afford to give. Christmas is always the most stressful time of the year for those in need and organizations like food banks are relied on heavily to ease the burden.

The thing is the food bank needs people to give to them so they can feed others. Thankfully, many groups organize food bank donations at this time of year. CBC Radio has a Jam The Van to gather food for the banks.

The Loblaws stores, including Superstore and Extra Foods have the Extra Helping Food Drive running for two weeks across Saskatchewan. One hundred per cent of food donations and 70 per cent of cash donations go to each store’s local food bank, while 30 per cent of donated cash will support provincial programs benefitting food banks.

According to Food Banks Canada member, Food Banks of Saskatchewan, an estimated 18,875 Saskatchewan residents, with 44 per cent of them children, rely on a food bank in an average month. Sadly, almost 87 per cent of all food bank users are of Aboriginal ancestry.

And the staff at the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations will be chipping in as well. Some of the proceeds from the sale of tables at their annual Christmas party will be earmarked for Saskatchewan food banks.

“I want to thank the FSIN staff for their generosity as they help those in need this holiday season,” said FSIN Chief Guy Lonechild at a press conference at the Saskatoon Food Bank.

“During this era of new leadership, the FSIN is focused on helping women, youth, children, seniors and urban First Nation people. Our vision is that someday no one will need to rely on a food bank to help their family,” Chief Lonechild said.

“The timing of the support could not have been better for all food banks in Saskatchewan,” said Paul Merriman CEO of the Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre.

“For the FSIN to be able to open up their Christmas to an outside organization and donate some of the proceeds to charity is very heart warming.”
By Mike Gosselin
For Eagle Feather News

Even though friends, family, peers and students were surprised Oskayak High School teacher Jacqueline Lavallee would be Saskatoon’s Official Olympic Torch Bearer, it definitely didn’t come as a shock. She’s a well-respected teacher, dedicated coach and proud role model who tirelessly gives back to the community.

“It’s important for kids to have someone to look up to,” she said from Oskayak High School recently. “I had countless teachers and coaches who were very influential and I’m so grateful for the time and effort they dedicated to me.”

A Métis born and raised in Saskatoon, Lavallee has traveled Canada and the world playing basketball for the University of Saskatchewan, Team Canada and the Marburg Marlins - a professional team in Germany.

Today she coaches numerous basketball teams ranging from the high school to national level and has a mile-long list of academic and athletic awards to her credit.

“I have been given some pretty amazing opportunities throughout my life. But this (being named Torch Bearer) came as quite a surprise to me. I didn’t apply or have to go through a process. I was nominated and a committee chose me.”

As an athlete, playing in the Olympic Games was something Lavallee always aspired to do. Even though it never materialized, Lavallee says her dream of representing Canada in the Olympics was simply realized by a different means.

“I didn’t make it to the Olympics as a participant ... but now I have this unbelievable opportunity to be involved in a very special way.”

Although she was elated with being chosen, Lavallee admits to not fully understanding the importance of her job as Torch Bearer until an Olympic Gold Medalist stopped by Oskayak to talk to the students. “Joan McCusker came to the school and talked about how the Olympic flame ignites the hopes and dreams of people around the world. Her words were very powerful and I was deeply honored and overwhelmed at the same time.”

It must not be easy having the hopes and dreams of the world resting on one’s shoulders but come January 11, 2010 in Kiwanis Park, Jacqueline Lavallee will keep the flame burning.

“I’m running the final leg of the relay (in Saskatoon). The last 300 meters. Then I will light the cauldron.”

And it seems only fitting it should be someone who ignites the hopes and dreams of our youth on a daily basis.
No joy in Riderville as season comes to disappointing conclusion

All across Saskatchewan on Grey Cup Sunday people started celebrating. With the Riders comfortably ahead in the third quarter it looked like we had it in the bag.

Someone forgot to tell the CFL’s best offense and its 2009 MVP Anthony Calvillo. He carved up the Saskatchewan secondary with pass after pass.

And a defense that held the Alouettes to 3 first half points looked lost and bewildered at times in the second half. Montreal outscored Saskatchewan 25-10 in the second half and won what was surely a Grey Cup Classic.

But the game will always be remembered around Saskatchewan as the one that got away. On what was to be the last play of the game, Montreal missed what would have been the game winning field goal. And as all of Saskatchewan celebrated our Grey Cup victory, a $%&$ too many men on the field penalty was assessed to the Riders and Montreal got another chance at victory.

Yes we all know what happened next.

And victory, which was surely ours, is ripped from all of us and we are forced to play second fiddle again.

The Riders staff and players handled the loss gracefully. Nothing less could be expected from a Ken Millar coached club. And as we say around these parts far too often, “don’t worry guys, we will get them next year!”

Random Thoughts

The Toronto Maple Leafs are the worst franchise in hockey, no doubt about it. From management to the product on the ice … Iverson goes back to Philly and cries. It did nothing but hurt his credibility. He can’t act and perpetuate a certain type of person his whole career and then cry at the mic, lost respect for you man …

Fight of the year, maybe decade is coming in March. Pacquiao vs. Mayweather will undoubtedly decide who the best pound for pound fighter of our time is … Roy Halladay to the Yankees or Red Sox has gotta be the worst idea J.P. Ricciardi has ever had. You want to win more games, you don’t trade the best pitcher in baseball over the last five years to a team you have to face more than any other team each year. Give your head a shake buddy!

Dumais brothers fight their battles in ring

Matt and Clay Dumais are just like any other set of brothers. Competitive to a fault and always pushing each other to be better.

So it comes as no surprise that when Matt decided to give up fighting after years in the ring that it was his older brother Clay who convinced him to get back at it.

Matt had taken a few years off to try and spend more time with his daughter and be a better dad. But his competitive juices never stopped flowing.

“Clay knew the only way to get me back in the ring was to start fighting himself, and sure enough it worked,” explains Matt.

Clay has had only two fights. But in what was just his second fight he ended up winning the provincial championship for 181 lbs.

He has dropped from 237 lbs to his fighting weight of 181 lbs. Quite a significant weight loss and damn good way to keep himself healthy.

He does all this despite holding down a job and trying to be the best father possible to his child and the one on the way.

Matt will be looking to get into the ring in the New Year, no longer as an amateur but as a pro.

Over the years Matt has fought and won gold gloves in Alberta and Saskatchewan and even gone down to Wyoming and Oklahoma and conquered all on his journey.

He is also a former Western Canadian Champ and Indigenous Games Champion.

Matt and Clay Dumais are just like any other set of brothers. Competitive to a fault and always pushing each other to be better.
Fleury signed jerseys, photos, hockey cards and books at McNally’s and stayed until everyone was finished. And he posed for many photos. Here in the back row is Theo Fleury, Ethan Constant, Chris Halcrow, Eric Thakurdeen, Andrea Constant and in front we have Fleury fans Chavez Constant and Desirae Constant.

(Photograph by John Lagimodiere)

DECEMBER 2009

Eagle Feather News - Sports

31

Fleury found peace with sobriety

• Continued from Page One

From world champion to down in the dumps crack addict, Fleury has taken his life experience and exposed himself for all to see in his new biography, Playing With Fire.

In an exclusive interview with Eagle Feather News, Fleury bared his all, as he does on almost every stop on his national book tour.

The book was therapy for Fleury, and also an explanation for what when wrong in his life.

“I wanted people to understand why my hockey career tailed off at the end. I wanted to inspire people to get sober and deal with their issues and I think more for me to give to people,” said Fleury.

“The book is a gift that tells them you can always achieve your dreams no matter what happens in your life. In my life, drugs and alcohol took a lot away from me. Through the process of recovery, I was able to get that back. And to put your life on paper and look at it is quite therapeutic. Now my past stands in the past and allows me to move forward.”

And forward he has come. Prior to Sept. 18, 2005, Fleury’s life was a train wreck. Even though he was one of the best hockey players in the world and a multi-millionaire, Fleury was on a one-way bus ride to death as his life spiraled out of control with cocaine fueled alcohol binges laced with expensive hookers and high stakes gambling.

Fleury, seemingly with the world in the palm of his hand, was being eaten up by his past, a past that included three years with the monster Graham James, a hockey coach with a predilection for young boys. Fleury was sexually abused by Graham James for three years while he played for James in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.

“Being absorbed destroys your trust,” said Fleury. “And the abusers, they know they have the power and they know you won’t tell anyone so you become helpless. In the past if I had a flashback I would immediately go to food, drugs, sex, gambling. I did not want to feel bad but I had my coping medicines . . . my therapy. Booze is a depressant. I was self-medicating in a hard way.”

Fleury mediated his way right out of the NHL, at one time failing nine consecutive drug tests and using his infant son’s urine on others. At one time he bought a gun from a pawn shop, took it home, loaded it and stuck in his mouth. He just couldn’t pull the trigger. On Sept. 18, 2005, Theo Fleury made the decision to become sober and to stop the pain.

“FortunatelY I never lost hope. I always had that. And then I was so fortunate that my family forgave me,” said Fleury.

“Put them through hell. The greatest gift you can give someone is forgiveness. When you have hope, you have the opportunity to get forgiveness. You need those relationships in your life and then as long as you live one day at a time you will be all right. Now my life is about respect and accountability all the time.”

Fleury admits to attending almost every type of therapy one can imagine and he sees some drawbacks to the models out there.

“Through my own process, I think we need more qualified people in the helping aspect. The psychologists, psychotherapists . . . they need more education and training than they already have about the dynamics of abuse,” said Fleury.

“I think they are lacking in that knowledge. Once they are trained, we need the people in power . . . lawyers, police . . . they need to be on board. I don’t think that someone who is not in recovery can tell their story to the police and feel safe that they are going to get justice coming out. It holds people back from filing complaints.”

Sadly, most victims don’t file complaints about sexual abuse.

“Did you know that one in six boys and one in three girls will be sexually abused before they turn 16 years old?” asks Fleury.

He has now found the passion to speak out for the abused and to help them on their healing journey. For once, this super pest of the NHL, is finally at peace.

“Sobriety has allowed me to find peace. The best part of my life is now I have figured out my purpose. That is to be in service to help people recover from things that have happened to them,” said Fleury who almost takes on an evangelistic fervor when he gets going on the topic.

“We are setting up the Theo Fleury Foundation to help get more people educated. The more we educate those in authority the better. People should not have to live with abuse, or the effects. It is not their fault that they were abused. I found that the truth set me free.”

Theo Fleury will always be remembered for his firebrand hockey, his drive to achieve at all costs and his take no prisoners attitude. Those traits allowed this Métis kid from Oxbow, Sask., to conquer the world. His demons almost took it all away. Now, as he ventures into a new career with a new cause, the future looks bright for Theo Fleury. With the number one book in the country with over 80,000 copies sold, a foundation to create, a movie offer and a potential country album in the works, it looks like Theo is going to be all right.

Eagle Feather Q & A with Theo Fleury

Theo Fleury took time to chat with Eagle Feather News about his playing career as well. He and his brother run hockey schools that come into First Nation communities and do three day camps and Theo wants to see more Aboriginal players in the NHL.

If you want more info go to www.theofleury14.com

What is worse, a book tour or doing bus time in life behind in 2005.

“I put them through hell. The greatest gift you can give someone is forgiveness. When you have hope, you have the opportunity to get forgiveness. You need those relationships in your life and then as long as you live one day at a time you will be all right. Now my life is about respect and accountability all the time.”

What is your hobby?

“I like to read. Now that I am an author, I like to read a lot of non-fiction books like biographies. I left the fantasy life behind in 2005. I like to know what makes people tick.”

What was it like being a Métis kid in the NHL?

“Well, I have been on a spiritual journey in the last four years and I am reconnecting to my Métis heritage. I was in Winnipeg and stopped at the Manitoba Métis Federation and sat with President Chartrand for about four hours and had a pretty cool chat about who we are as a people and our culture and he sent me home with four big text books and I am reading through them when I have time. It has been great. I got a couple sashes you know. My grandpa father was a great fiddle player, which is a big part of our culture. We are a big family of talented musicians who work hard and don’t take shit from anybody. . . which is a Métis trait. It has been a cool experience.”

If you could pick your all time Aboriginal forward line, who would it be?

(We suggested Reggie Leach, Bryan Trottier and Theo?) Wow, that would be a pretty good line. But who is on the back end? I love this topic. I am going to use my Facebook page to find out the all-time all-Aboriginal hockey team.

What was your ultimate sporting moment?

You know . . . for my first 35 years, every day I got to wake up and do what I love to do and that was just play hockey.

The old deserted island question . . one book, one movie, one music album what do you take?

Can I say the Bible? Forest Gump and Buck Owens Greatest Hits!
On behalf of the Board, management and staff of the Clarence Campeau Development Fund, we wish you a happy Christmas as well as health, happiness and prosperity in the new year.

Serving Saskatchewan’s Métis
www.clarencecampeau.com

The mission of the CCDF is to improve the economic circumstances of Saskatchewan’s Métis by providing funding for business development, community economic development and development of management skills and assistance to new and existing Métis owned businesses.

Loan/Equity Contribution Program
Community Business Development Program
Support for Aftercare Program
Development of Management & Marketing Skills Program
Business Plan Assistance Program
Large Scale or Joint Venture Project Program

Please contact us at:
www.clarencecampeau.com
email: info@clarencecampeau.com
2158 Airport Drive
Saskatoon, SK S7J 6M6
(306) 651-4870
Fax (306) 651-4890
Toll Free: 1-888-651-4870

New Location
2380 2nd Ave
Regina, SK S4R 1A6
Phone: 306-790-CCDF (2233)
Toll Free: 877-359-CCDF (2233)
Fax: 306-790-2220
Email: regina.info@clarencecampeau.com